

**Saint Peter's College**

**Distance Learning**

**Policies and Guidelines**



**As of: October 2007**

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## **Section I – Mission Statement**

Distance learning at Saint Peter's College is intended to enhance students' understanding and use of the Internet for educational and research purposes and to enrich course content and pedagogy. One of the academic goals of Saint Peter's College is: "to enable students to acquire the knowledge, skills and values needed for leadership in serving others and shaping society's response to social, technological and environmental change". Providing students with opportunities for distance learning will facilitate achievement of this goal.

Distance Learning courses will be offered to sophomores, juniors and seniors and graduate students of the College. Freshman students will not be offered distance learning courses.

## **Section II – Distance Learning Definition**

Distance learning is defined as any electronic mediated formal learning program wherein the students and faculty are separated by distance, time, or both. Distance learning makes central use of electronic technology (i.e., Blackboard ) for the organization and presentation of intellectual content and for the delivery of course components. Distance learning includes: online Blackboard courses, videotapes, audio tapes, two way video and audio, computer-based media, and the emerging technology of the Internet.

A distance learning course has two components: the intellectual content and its delivery or dissemination. The delivery of distance learning courses entails a different balance of technologies. Instructors and students must be able to communicate with each other (for example, via the Internet, email, or synchronous video). Distance learning courses often require a more intensive and intimate involvement by the faculty. Because students frequently communicate with faculty there is a constant need to keep online course content up-to-date and informative.

There will be 2 kinds of distance learning courses at Saint Peter's College: online and hybrid. Following are their definitions:

- Online: the instructor may meet in person/in class with students for an amount of time up to 50% of total class hours.
- Hybrid: the instructor must meet in person/in class with students for a minimum of 50% of the total class hours.

A maximum of 20 students will be allowed to register for a distance learning course.

### **Section III – Program Management**

All Distance Learning activities shall be supported and managed by the Distance Learning Committee with direct oversight by the Academic Dean's Office. Policy and guideline development and support for course marketing, planning, scheduling, training, and implementation will be the responsibility of the Distance Learning Committee in conjunction with the faculty member.

### **Section IV – Faculty Responsibilities**

Faculty teaching distance learning courses must:

- attend faculty development workshops.
- participate in the course approval process.
- participate in course evaluation process.
- submit copy of syllabus as per college guidelines. Syllabus must also be submitted to the Distance Learning Committee.
- adhere to all College policies and guidelines regarding distance learning.
- make changes in software/hardware in order to deliver quality Distance Learning courses.
- maintain an electronic file of all course syllabi.
- maintain on campus/in person office hours, one hour for each course.
- provide ample feedback to students.
- decisions regarding content selection and choice remains with the faculty.
- for both online and hybrid courses, the faculty member must conduct an in person/in class orientation for students

Online and Hybrid courses are held to the same standard of quality as face to face instruction and must:

- promote active learning
- promote student to student and student to faculty interaction
- include Web resources/Webliography
- read and respond to student/group e-mail
- integrate use of the discussion board, and other tools which promote student participation.

In addition, faculty are encouraged to share content/tools with other faculty teaching distance learning courses. A Knowledge Repository in Blackboard is available for faculty to use to obtain course design/development material, syllabi, course calendar examples, announcements, discussion board captions, and tips and techniques for developing online courses (how to set-up tests, how to load publisher content, how to direct students to course evaluations, etc..).

A faculty member cannot teach more than two online/hybrid courses per term.

## **Section V - Standard Components of Distance Learning Courses**

The following components should be included in every distance learning course:

- a) a course syllabus
- b) course outcomes
- c) a detailed description of how to submit assignments
- d) a technical help page – when students have technical problems with the course, they should be directed to resources for assistance
- e) a student resources page – a page containing hyperlinks to College resources designed for students who are seeking help or support. An example would be a web page that contains hyperlinks to the Library, or important semester dates (College Calendar),
- f) instructor contact information: students must be provided reasonable opportunity for private contact and communication with the course instructor. Contact information should include office hours, telephone number, email address, fax number (if available), and mailing address. Regularly scheduled synchronous chat sessions could also be included, provided that the chat sessions allow for private sessions between the student and the instructor.
- g) each Internet course must provide for the interaction among students and faculty and students. An online discussion forum would be an example of this.
- h) each Internet course should provide the student with a calendar for assignment completion to help pace the student through the course. Due to the nature of distance learning, students need a guide and calendar for completion of assignments.
- i) all Internet courses will be password protected and each student enrolled in the course shall be given a username and password to the course.
- j) the Distance Learning Committee will perform a student assessment for the delivery methods for all Internet courses.
- m) a standard Saint Peter's College logo should be on the home page of the course web to clearly identify the course with the College. This logo used should be the same on all courses.

## **Section VI – Evaluation of Courses**

Courses are to be evaluated by the same standards as traditional courses and the areas assessed must be equivalent to traditional courses. Student evaluations for distance learning courses have been set-up as a Blackboard Survey. Each instructor will receive an email with the link, for the online course, that students will use to gain access to the course evaluation. This link needs to be placed in your online course for students to access prior to completion of course. Once the course has been completed, the evaluation will be printed by Information Technology and sent to the appropriate Dean's Office for filling and distribution. The instructor will not have access to the course evaluation (Blackboard Survey).

## **Section VII - Student Guidelines**

### **Students must:**

- Have access to an Internet provider with help available for technical computer problems
- Be able to use an alternative computer in case of technical problems.
- Have and are able to use their College email account and check it frequently.
- Be able to work independently and willing to spend 9 - 12 or more hours per week.
- Be able to manage their time well; do not procrastinate or give up easily.
- Be able to study from written material, notes, and videos.
- Be able to read at a level appropriate for college materials.
- Persist, not give up easily.
- Write well and have keyboarding skills (type and write).
- Be able to work in Word and send an attached file.

## **Section VIII - Scholastic Dishonesty and Plagiarism**

Saint Peter's College has an honor code for academic behavior that insists on a high degree of intellectual honesty. The following is a definition of plagiarism and a clarification of that definition. Though no definition can be wholly inclusive, the following definition sets the boundaries on what is acceptable academic behavior while at Saint Peter's.

*Plagiarism is an act in which a student uses someone else's words or ideas without due acknowledgment in order to gain some form of reward.*

**Certain words and ideas in this definition need to be clarified:**

- a. **"uses someone else's words"** is the unacknowledged use either of any original or important words from another source, or three or more consecutive words from any unacknowledged source.
- b. **"uses someone else's . . . ideas"** includes use without acknowledgment of any interpretative idea, even a general idea taken from a general source, or any fact not in general knowledge. It also includes use of the paraphrased, altered, condensed, or simplified phraseology from an unacknowledged source. It is plagiarism when the unacknowledged use occurs in any written work, including "homework" or practice work that will be graded or presumed to be the work of the individual who is presenting it.
- c. **"without due acknowledgment"** means any situation in which the reader of the immediate document cannot tell that the writer that he/she is reading is not primary source of the ideas and/or words. Simply placing a work in a reference or works cited list is not enough. Neither is placing a parenthetical reference at the end of the paragraph. There is a clear need for both the accuracy of quotations marks, appropriately placed parenthetical references, and an accurate works cited page. If any one of these is missing, plagiarism could result.
- d. **"someone else's"** includes, but is not limited to, any work that has been published, including books, multi-volume works, academic journals, popular magazines, or any papers/notes produced as "study guides" or "study aids." It includes all electronic sources. The phrase also includes the use of any unpublished work, whether produced by a fellow student or not, whether borrowed, stolen, or paid for (including work from internet paper services). It does not include broad general knowledge or lecture information given in the class for which the paper is written. The writer must check with the instructor to determine if the use of class/lecture notes is an acceptable source of information.  
  
The phrase "someone else's" also includes excessive aid accepted from, or given to, other students, even in spoken form. Excessive aid, for instance, includes ideas dictated to a student and placed in the student's paper.
- e. **"reward"** here means benefit, tangible or intangible, received by any party involved in the acts of plagiarism or cheating.

**Ignorance of the precise definition of plagiarism is no more an excuse than ignorance of the law is an excuse. It is up to the student to become aware of the general principles and the specific criteria of individual instructors.**

## **Cheating: Statement and Definition**

Cheating is more often than not more clear an offense than is plagiarism. Cheating is an act of:

- a. giving or receiving, and/or aiding in either the giving or receiving of any unauthorized information during a test or quiz,
- b. communicating the contents, general or specific, of any test or quiz to include the lending or borrowing of past tests or quizzes when the instructor has not specifically sanctioned this act,
- c. using in the testing area any covert and unacceptable means of receiving or giving information on a test or quiz, and
- d. taking a test/quiz for another student.

Beyond tests and quizzes, if a student turns in one paper for two classes without gaining consent from both instructors, it is considered an act of dishonesty and, therefore, an act of cheating (i.e., receiving double credit for a single assignment).

Any time a student is in doubt about what he or she is going to do, it is the student's responsibility to check with the instructor before doing it.

## **Section IX – Distance Learning Committee Members**

- Dr. Marylou Yam, Academic Dean
- Dr. Paul Almonte, Department of English
- Dr. Karl Alorbi, Department of Business
- Dr. Jack Hampton, KPMG Professor, and Director of Graduate Business Programs
- Dr. Nicole Luongo, Department of Education
- Dr. Edward Moskal, Department of Computer & Information Sciences
- Dr. David Surrey, Department of Sociology and Urban Studies